

EDAD 639: Administrative Practicum
Chadron State College
Forum Discussion – Chapter 2
Kellen Conroy
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Discuss the vision development process as the district & school level. Also discuss how you will articulate the vision within your school. (Helping others see the vision & maintaining the vision within your school).

As Hackman et.al. (2002) state, “A vision is a picture of what the organization would look like if operating at its maximum potential in achieving its common goal” (pg. 38). In order to establish a school culture in which all components: students, staff, and stakeholders operate at the highest possible potential, school leaders must develop a plan to implement a shared vision based upon shared values, beliefs, and goals. Developing a shared vision and a plan for the implementation of the shared vision is easier said than done. “For a vision to be effective, it must be centered on the enduring beliefs and values that motivate individuals to strive for the highest ideals and performance” (Hoyle, English, & Steffy 1998 pg. 1). In order to complete this task successfully school leaders need to be able to answer questions related not only to their beliefs and values, but the beliefs, values, and goals of the community as well.

When developing a vision of teaching and learning, effective leadership, or school organization a leader must first be able to define what a vision is and spend a great deal of time reflecting upon their personal vision of education. Hoyle et.al. (1998) state, “a vision is a dream in action” (pg. 1). Often, initiatives and plans begin with a simple dream and/or idea. All it takes for an effective leader is a spark and once that spark is shared with inspired colleagues that spark ignites into a wave of meaningful and positive actions. In the school setting we can relate the discussion to the visioning development

process in relation to the overall school culture, a vision of teaching and learning, or even the development of a vision of curricular practices.

Reflecting upon my own vision development process and how I would communicate the shared vision with students, staff, and stakeholders has enabled me to relate that experience to an opportunity to share that development process with a school that has requested help in developing a vision for curricular practices. When thinking about the request for support that this school has made, I am immediately drawn to a communication component. “Good communicators speak with clarity and conviction, show passion and enthusiasm for their message, take time to be appropriately prepared, and are honest and consistent with their public.” (Hackmann, Schmitt-Oliver, & Tracy 2002 pg. 47). In any strategic plan, vision development, or when support is provided communication is critical to the success of the desired outcome. It is important that as a good communicator I am also being a good listener and allowing others to share input in the development of the vision or process.

In an effort to more effectively support the school and the request for help in the visioning process, I have put together a plan that will be shared with the school’s administration and also the steering committee, which is made up of district administration and a selection of teachers and staff members. The first step in the vision development process will be to complete a self-assessment relating to: Where are we now, where do we want to be, and how do we get there (Hackmann, Schmitt-Oliver, & Tracy 2002 pg. 42)? It will be important for the steering committee to self-assess and reflect prior to diving right into a vision and goals relating to curriculum. After the completion of the self-assessment, we will then move into the strategic planning process.

“Strategic planning is a proven method of positioning an organization to realize its goals in an inclusive, participatory manner, using different models of the process that have evolved over the past decade” (Hackmann, Schmitt-Oliver, & Tracy 2002 pg. 41). The strategic planning process will allow the team to share ideas relating to curricular beliefs, values, and goals. From those discussions and information we will then be able to draft visions of curriculum. It will be important to for the steering committee to draft visions that encompass the values and beliefs of the entire school community, not just those sitting around the table. Once there has been a draft of a vision, the steering committee needs to begin to communicate that vision with other district personnel. It is important to gain consensus and support relating to vision of curriculum. If consensus is not built prior to the introduction of the vision and goals, and the teachers/staff feel that this is being pressed upon them, the overall success of the vision of curriculum will be in jeopardy. The steering committee then must take the feedback and apply it to the revised draft of the vision. When the vision has been finalized and the self-assessment is completed, the process will then move to the action phase. What actions do we need to take to get from where we are to where we want to be? What actions support the vision and which current actions work against the vision? The steering committee must analyze appropriate actions that will support the vision and goals set forth for their work in the area of curriculum.

Communicating the vision, practices, and goals with the entire staff is a critical piece to the success of the vision. All administration, teachers, and staff must be on the same page in terms of curriculum and practices relating to curriculum. An idea for continuous communication would be to put the vision of curriculum in sight of the

teachers, staff, and community. In addition to the overall vision of the school district, creating a vision of curriculum poster for each classroom and meeting room would be a continuous reminder to students and school personnel. In addition school updates that are sent throughout the community to stakeholders must include the overall vision of the school and also the vision of curriculum.

As one can see this visioning process will not be completed during the span of one or two meetings. If this process is to be done correctly with the greatest chances of success, time will be needed to appropriately address each step. Having this learning opportunity with this school is priceless. It will be important that in my position, I appropriately facilitate discussions and provide appropriate feedback. This vision will be the school's not mine; they will need to own the vision and practices. However, this experience will provide a much-needed look into the vision development process in a real-life setting and it will also provide me with the knowledge of how to or not to structure a vision development process.

References:

- Hackmann, D.G., Schmitt-Oliver, D.M., & Tracy, J.C. (2002). *The standards-based administrative internship*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.
- Hoyle, J.R., English, F.W., & Steffy, B.E. (1998). *Skills for successful 21st century school leaders: Standards for peak performers*. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.